AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently amended)** A method for preparing a ~~**human patient**~~ sample **obtained from a human patient** for performing a diagnostic method ~~**on the sample**~~ **to detect whether the patient has been infected with** ~~**for detection of**~~ an infectious agent, wherein the sample is an endocervical fluid sample or a vaginal fluid sample, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

a) treating the sample to reduce an inhibitory effect of the sample on the diagnostic method; and

b) performing ~~**at least one step of**~~ the diagnostic method in the presence of DNase.

2. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the DNase is present in an amount selected from the group consisting of: (i) more than 0.5 μg/ml and (ii) 0.5 to 100 μg/ml.

3. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the DNase is present in an amount selected from the group consisting of: (i) more than 1.5 units of activity per ml and (ii) 1.5 to 300 units activity per ml.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the sample is treated with an oxidizing agent.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4 wherein the oxidizing agent is hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2).

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5 using a working concentration of hydrogen peroxide of 0.5% to 3% w/v.

7. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 1, wherein the sample is treated with a non-ionic alkyl glucoside surfactant.

8. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 7 wherein the surfactant is n-dodecyl maltoside.

9. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 8 wherein the n-dodecyl maltoside is present at a working concentration selected from the group consisting of: (i) 0.01% to 0.04% w/v and (ii) 0.015% to 0.03% w/v.

10. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the sample is treated with either or both of **Polyvinyl alcohol (**PVA**)** and **Polyvinyl pyrrolidone (**PVP**)**.

11. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 10**,** wherein the sample is treated with PVA**~~, preferably having an average molecular weight between 20 and 25 kDa and~~** at a working concentration of between 0.01 and 0.5% w/v**, wherein the PVA has an average molecular weight between 20 and 25 kDa**.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the sample is treated with PVP at a working concentration between 0.2% and 2% w/v.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the human patient sample is obtained as a self-collected vaginal swab sample.

15. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the method is for detection of *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

16. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the patient sample is a self-collected vaginal swab sample and the method is for detection of *Chlamydia*

trachomatis.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the method is a dipstick test method.

18. (Withdrawn) A kit comprising: a dipstick test apparatus for carrying out a specific infectious agent detection test; reagents required for said apparatus in order to carry out said specific detection tests; a DNase reagent for carrying out the method of any of claims 1 to 3.

19. (Withdrawn) A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: an oxidizing agent reagent for carrying out the method of any of claims 4 to 6.

20. (Withdrawn) A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: a non-ionic alkyl glucoside reagent for carrying out the method of any of claims 7 to 9.

21. (Withdrawn) A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: a reagent which is PVA and/or PVP for carrying out the method of any of claims 10 to 12.

22. (Withdrawn) A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: a non-ionic alkyl glucoside surfactant reagent as defined in any of claims 4 to 6 and a PVA and/or PVP reagent as defined in any of claims 7 to 9 for carrying out the method of any of claims 1 to 15.